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United Nations Volunteers

Report of the Administrator

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SUMMARY

Unprecedented changes in the economic, social and political spheres are bringing benefits to some and increased impoverishment to many others. A beacon in the struggle to address poverty concerns is the spectacular growth in the past decade of both organized and spontaneous volunteer response. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme continues to demonstrate, through its universality, its outreach to the more disadvantaged population groups, and its flexibility and willingness to adapt and change, that it is a valuable partner of Governments and civil society in helping to harness volunteer contributions to move the international agenda forward. The biennium 1996-1997 marked a watershed in the life of UNV with the relocation of its headquarters and the launch of Strategy 2000. At the close of the biennium, UNV was able to report the highest number of serving UNVs and the most diversified programme in its 27-year history. UNV is cognizant of the findings of external and internal reviews undertaken during the biennium, and is now well under way to improving the quality of its service to meet the high standards set by donors and programme countries alike and to ensuring the systematic documentation, replication and scaling-up of volunteer contributions. Taken together with speedier fielding and tighter monitoring of impact, these measures will help expand and strengthen the role of the UNV programme as a global advocate for volunteering and to demonstrate that volunteer efforts constitute a real development choice as the International Year of Volunteers in 2001 approaches.

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report responds to Governing Council decision 92/2 requesting the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to report on a biennial basis, which was reaffirmed in Executive Board decision 96/32.[1] The report summarizes the key features and achievements of UNV work in the last two years, and outlines the vision and strategic directions adopted by the programme as it charts its course into the next century within the overarching context of United Nations reform. In this connection, the advice and action of the Executive Board is sought, specifically on UNV plans as it prepares for activities in the next two years and for the International Year of Volunteers, 2001.

II. UNV: KEY EVENTS FROM 1996 TO 1997

A. An evolving profile

2. The past two years have witnessed a period of growth and change for UNV that has touched its programme, UNVs and its partners. The range of work of the UNVs and their roles have evolved rapidly to keep pace with changes in the global environment and the needs of developing countries. While support to development cooperation and extensive involvement with community work remain the hallmarks of the programme, the trend in the previous biennium towards diversification of UNV activities into the areas of humanitarian and emergency relief, peace-building and electoral support, resettlement of demobilized soldiers and human rights education has resulted in a new profile for the programme overall. The underlying characteristic remains, however, the matching of the solidarity of volunteers with the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized population groups with whom they serve.

3. The changing profile of UNV has been accompanied by the progressive introduction of greater flexibility in the terms and conditions of service for volunteers as well as the further broadening of volunteer profiles and their areas of work, to include, in addition to international UNV specialists and field workers, national UNVs (NUNVs), short duration humanitarian relief UNVs, locally contracted eco-volunteers, United Nations agency-supported HIV/AIDS and cultural heritage UNVs, United Nations International Short-Term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) assignments involving the private sector, and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) modality. New partnerships forged during the biennium with, for example, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with United Nations bodies such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations International Drug Control

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[1] Current usage in the United Nations Volunteers programme of the acronym UNV is: (a) the organization is referred to as the UNV programme or as UNV; (b) an individual volunteer is referred to as a UNV (who may be either a UNV specialist or a UNV field worker), the plural of which is UNVs; (c) a national UNV is referred to as such or as an NUNV, the plural of which is NUNVs. The current usage is respected in the present report.

Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR) and the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO), and with some civil society organizations have already resulted in joint endeavours in programme countries. The initiative to promote the full involvement of people directly touched by the very issues being addressed was intensified. This clear expression of the participatory nature of the UNV programme included the mobilization of eco-volunteers, artisans, returnee refugees, indigenous people, and HIV/AIDS-infected individuals to serve as NUNVs in their communities. Finally, the trend continues towards more diversified sources of funding for volunteer assignments.

4. The table below summarizes key features of the UNV programme over the present and last biennium.

UNV PROGRAMME: SOME PRINCIPAL INDICATORS FOR 1994-1997

UNVs/years	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total UNVs serving throughout year	3 502	3 263	3 242	3 620
Serving as of 31 December	2 085	2 190	1 988	2 302
RATIO OF UNVs (31 December figures)				
From industrialized countries	27%	26%	28%	30%
From developing countries	73%	74%	72%	70%
GENDER (based on 31 December figures)				
Male	73%	70%	67%	65%
Female	27%	30%	33%	35%

5. The table shows: (a) the overall growth of the programme, notwithstanding a six-year low in the numbers of serving UNVs recorded at the end of 1996, reflecting the temporary disruption occasioned by the relocation of UNV headquarters in July 1996; (b) the programme's universality. This is further highlighted by the fact that the number of countries from which UNVs were recruited has increased (in absolute figures) from 125 to 144 over the biennium; and (c) the evolving gender balance, with women now representing 35 per cent of all serving UNVs, up from 27 per cent in 1994. Women constitute over half the 70 UNV Programme Officers serving in UNDP country offices (60 funded from the biennial support budget of UNV and 10 from other resources).

B. Key events during the biennium

6. Strategy 2000 was launched at the beginning of 1997, following a consultative and participatory process undertaken over an 18-month period during

which inputs were collected from more than 400 internal and external stakeholders. It provides UNV and its partners with a frame of reference for the scope and direction of the programme from 1997 to 2000. The strategy combines pro-active programme development, in the context of follow-up to global conferences, with the need to ensure responsiveness to the demands of partners in the programme countries.

7. The major event during the biennium in the implementation of the first track of Strategy 2000, pro-active programme development, was the holding of the Fourth UNV Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) in Bonn in December 1997 to debate the topic "A Globalizing World: Roles for Volunteers?". It also provided an opportunity for UNV to seek further guidance on the directions mapped out by Strategy 2000 in the three areas of focus: (a) urban development; (b) environmental management; and (c) preventive and curative development. Over five days, some 300 representatives of Governments of industrialized and developing countries, volunteer-sending organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations specialized agencies and UNDP reviewed examples of the proactive side of the UNV programme and shared common lessons. The proceedings culminated with the adoption of a comprehensive statement referred to as the Bonn Declaration (see annex II).

8. Several key messages emerged from the fourth IGM. UNV was urged to expand and strengthen its role as a global advocate for volunteers and for volunteering as a real development choice. UNV was also enjoined to capitalize on its comparative advantage of serving the broad United Nations system with a presence at the grass-roots level, combined with ready access to Governments. These two things, taken together, provide significant opportunities for emphasizing the human face of the United Nations. The IGM recommended that UNV work to increase access for volunteer assistance to international development cooperation institutions, regional organizations and the private sector, and that it develop innovative partnerships with civil society. It also recommended that UNV continue to ground its work in community-based participatory approaches. The IGM welcomed UNV contributions to the strategic analysis of volunteer contributions in development and stressed that, to remain relevant and vibrant, UNV should strive to enhance its capacity as a learning organization by studying the impact of volunteer experiences on the front lines of development and to apply the lessons learned. It also encouraged UNV to raise awareness of volunteer action by documenting and disseminating best practices and sharing these with partners to assist in the scaling-up of successful approaches. Finally, the proclamation by the General Assembly of the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers was welcomed as an important step for recognizing, facilitating, networking and promoting the work of volunteers.

9. The main event marking efforts to implement the second track of Strategy 2000, ensuring responsiveness to the needs of partner programme countries, was the undertaking in Spring 1997 of a comprehensive workflow analysis of the operational processes of fielding and supporting UNVs. The objective was to identify measures to ensure higher quality support to serving volunteers and to provide quicker, simpler service geared to ensuring partner/client satisfaction. As follow-up to the recommendations of the analysis, three cross-functional task forces were set up to address: (a) issues of simplifying the application of UNV conditions of service; (b) streamlining

the volunteer identification and recruitment process; and (c) reviewing the computerized volunteer management system. Notable results have been:

(a) The realignment of internal processes and structures to ensure a substantial reduction in the time needed to process the recruitment of a volunteer;

(b) The streamlining and simplification of current conditions of service for international UNVs, drawing extensively on the experience and procedures developed for the rapid recruitment and deployment of volunteers for short-duration humanitarian intervention;

(c) A volunteer assignment compact, administered in a quick, decentralized manner, providing individual volunteers with more choice and flexibility by monetizing travel and terminal expenses, unaccompanied shipment costs and home-leave entitlements;

(d) Measures taken to establish user-interface guidelines for the computerized volunteer management system, centring on modernizing the look and feel of the system to take advantage of new windows-based technology. Training has been stepped up to reinforce familiarity with the operations of the system among newer staff in UNV;

(e) Monthly reporting to, and quarterly stocktaking by, UNV Senior Management of the key trends and indicators of UNV activities.

C. Illustrative examples of the UNV programme record during the biennium

10. Six main areas of UNV support during the biennium were (a) poverty eradication; (b) humanitarian relief; (c) post-conflict rehabilitation; (d) TOKTEN; (e) UNISTAR; and (f) innovative pilot initiatives.

1. Poverty eradication

11. In addressing poverty, and in accordance with the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development, UNV is engaged in working with self-help organizations of people living in poverty. Participatory approaches help to ensure that these programmes, designed to combat poverty, build on people's own survival strategies. The UNV presence at the grass-roots level facilitates the outreach of United Nations programmes to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in a manner that is appropriate at the local level.

12. Community development in the Central African Republic. During 1996-1997, a total of 54 international and national UNVs have carried out community development activities within the framework of UNDP assistance to the National Poverty Eradication Programme in Central African Republic. Through partnership with indigenous NGOs in different regions of the country, the UNVs have helped more than 130 communities to develop approximately 170 micro-enterprises in

areas such as agriculture and crafts. To facilitate these income-generating activities, a literacy programme was carried out, using the PARAFI (Parapluie alphabétisation fonctionelle intensive) model developed in Burkina Faso: 280 villagers - the majority of whom were women - completed a 48-day functional-literacy training programme and became themselves trainers in their own communities.

13. Poverty alleviation in Mongolia. Since 1996, 51 UNVs have been supporting the UNDP contribution to the multidonor-funded National Poverty Alleviation Programme. Serving under difficult living conditions in Mongolia's remote rural areas, mixed teams of international and national UNV specialists and community workers have supported capacity-building in areas of programme implementation, management, monitoring, and documentation of lessons learned. While many of the UNVs developed micro-credit facilities to support local development initiatives, others served in the areas of gender in development, skills training, and income-generation activities. Finally, the UNVs also supported the preparation of Mongolia's first human development report.

14. Community participation in protected areas in Cambodia. The Angkor Park, containing temples and monuments dating from the 8th to the 14th century, is an environmentally protected zone. The local inhabitants, many of whom live in poverty, are prohibited from clearing more land in the zone and from cutting down trees and brush to use and sell as firewood. Since 1995, UNV has been implementing a four-year pilot project geared to supporting the communities while protecting the natural environment and preserving the zone's cultural heritage. A mixed team of eight international and national UNVs works with the communities and in partnership with the local government authorities, UNDP and UNESCO in initiating and implementing sustainable small-scale activities in selected villages in Angkor Park through the use of participatory action research. The project has assisted the villagers to plant new rice varieties, improve water supply, plan new projects, use organic fertilizers and undertake their own resource mobilization.

2. Humanitarian relief

15. The contribution of UNVs in emergency activities is marked by solidarity and empathy with people whose lives have been devastated. In the biennium, over 3,500 professional women and men have dedicated their time and skills through short-term field-service assignments with UNV. They served in emergency relief, support and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons, human rights promotion and monitoring and post-conflict and peace-building activities. In addition to addressing immediate needs, the work for UNV extends to supporting local capacity-building as countries move from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development. New arrangements with key partners were established with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the International Office for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and with regional organizations such as the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). NUNVs were introduced for the first time in confidence-building and peace-building efforts in Armenia, Bosnia,

Burundi, Georgia, the occupied Palestinian territory and Rwanda to strengthen national efforts in addressing and tackling the gamut of complex issues immediately inherent in post-conflict situations.

16. Former Yugoslavia. In post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, over 60 UNVs assisted UNDP, UNHCR, IOM and WFP in repatriation and rehabilitation activities. Simultaneously, in 1996-1997, (and acting upon the Dayton Accords call for national elections) OSCE requested UNV to provide over 800 regional election coordinators and electoral observers. For the subsequent municipal elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as for elections in the Republic of Srbska, the OSCE turned again to UNV to recruit and field some 800 electoral observers. As a result of a joint collaborative effort with IOM and the Government of Germany, former Yugoslavian refugees in Germany have been helped to return and reintegrate into social and economic life in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Over 120 professional Bosnian nationals and their families were provided with an appropriate corridor to return to their homeland to serve as NUNVs. They were able to contribute to rebuilding livelihoods through rehabilitation and reconstruction work within community-based projects identified through the UNDP office in Sarajevo, United Nations specialized agencies, bilateral programmes, international and national NGOs and community-based organizations.

17. White Helmets. UNV has strengthened its collaboration with the White Helmets Initiative (WHI), created by the Government of Argentina. In response to the 1996 Executive Board recommendations, 20 humanitarian relief activities have been implemented in 20 countries during the biennium with financial support from the Governments of Argentina, France and Germany, including complementary cost-sharing arrangements using UNDP target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) line 1.1.3. funding. Recognition of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the UNV/WHI facility is highlighted by the total of $1.8 million in donor contributions to the UNV/WHI special window of the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) during 1996-1997. During this period, 95 per cent of these funds were spent in recruiting over 50 national UNV/WHI specialists, who have served in mixed teams with some 20 international UNV/WHI specialists in emergency humanitarian relief operations, and in post-conflict peace-building activities in Angola, Gaza and the West Bank, and elsewhere.

3. Post-conflict rehabilitation

18. Once conflict is over and people directly affected are able to turn to rebuilding their societies, UNVs have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the elements that contributed to the crisis do not re-emerge. Whether through support for the promotion of basic human rights, ensuring sustainable livelihoods in rural areas or channelling the energy of youth into social initiatives, the contribution of UNVs has been significant.

19. Human rights in Guatemala. A team of over 200 UNV human rights monitors, half of them women, assisted the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) to reach out to remote communities. The UNVs met tens of thousands of indigenous peoples (mostly non-Spanish speakers) in their remote villages and informed them, for the first time, of the progress in peace negotiations and explained their human rights. The UNVs were perceived as

neutral and a forum where Guatemalans could go to recount the abuses they had suffered. An important feature of the programme was that, for the first time in the history of similar United Nations missions, a group composed of 20 indigenous professionals from ethnic groups drawn both from Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America was specially assigned to verify the implementation of the Agreement on the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Groups of Guatemalans. The MINUGUA UNVs, coming from 31 countries, were singled out by the Secretary-General for special thanks and praise in two successive reports to the General Assembly.

20. Community-based youth participation and development project in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 1996, UNV initiated its work in the youth sector, highly fragmented after 30 years of conflict. Young Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been mobilized to play a more active role at local, regional and national levels to overcome the limited opportunities for training and employment. The strategy used NUNVs to stimulate increased community voluntary activity at existing youth centres. Through incentives such as training, local youth were identified to work as community volunteers, mobilizing other young people to participate in sports-related activities arranged at their local community youth centres. Based on findings from an evaluation conducted in mid-1997, project activities were extended from sports to cultural, social and civic activities, to increase community participation, particularly that of women, children and the disabled. These activities are being expanded to other centres in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and more young people are being engaged as volunteers.

21. Post-conflict resolution in Mozambique: A changing role for UNV. UNVs have been serving in Mozambique's peace-building efforts since the early 1990s. First, providing emergency support through food-aid distribution and health care. With the signing of the Peace Agreement in 1992, the UNV programme focused on supporting the peace process. Today, the emphasis is on long-term development efforts. This steady support to Mozambique has helped to establish UNV credibility as a development partner. The current UNV programme involves 37 international and national UNVs working in mixed teams assigned to rural areas in Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Maputo, Sofala and Tete, provinces. They support local efforts to improve community organizations, market rural products, access clean water and health services, ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and start small businesses. In addition, 23 UNV electoral advisers are supporting the National Election Commission in preparing the upcoming local elections.

4. Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN)

22. The TOKTEN programme, firmly rooted in the principle of volunteering, has a valuable role to play in countries where circumstances are conducive to the contribution that some of their expatriate citizens can make. The relatively low cost of TOKTEN advisors, their cultural affinity and linguistic background, and their acceptance by the host country makes this modality an attractive option for its users. While managed at the country level by the UNDP country office, there is scope for UNV to ensure more systematic collection, collation

and dissemination of information on best practices and to advocate more widespread application of the TOKTEN modality.

23. TOKTEN was operational in 20 counties in the biennium with over 700 advisory missions fielded. Examples of the types of impact resulting from the missions include: introducing the United States Library of Congress classification system to Polish university libraries; drafting the first income-tax law in the occupied Palestine territory; transferring latest know-how on fibre-optic communication systems in the Islamic Republic of Iran; overhauling the management system in the Philippines Overseas Employment Office; developing genetically engineered plants to combat desertification in the upper Yellow River region of China; and designing curricula for maths education of schoolgirls in Uganda. In addition to direct technical support, the TOKTEN programme has also resulted in well-qualified and experienced expatriates relocating to their countries of origin.

5. United Nations International Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR)

24. The significant contribution of UNISTAR to enhancing the capacity of private and public enterprise in developing and transition countries through the provision of short-term highly qualified volunteer advisors is built upon its global network of major corporations, small and medium enterprises and trade associations. The potential of employee-volunteering in the context of international development is vast and UNV continues to explore avenues to direct more of this talent towards meeting development concerns.

25. UNISTAR was active in 20 countries in the biennium with a total of 157 assignments. Its work was marked by expanded collaboration from its three key donors, the Governments of Ireland, Italy and Japan. Requests for highly qualified short-term volunteer advisors, met from private and public sector organizations in developing countries and from countries in transition, included: the analysis of design, marketing and production issues faced by manufacturers in such diverse businesses as jewellery, garments and auto parts manufacture in China; textiles in Morocco; shoe manufacturing in Ethiopia; the marketing of herb production in Argentina; and the development of a Masters of Business Administration programme in Viet Nam. UNISTAR also played a part in post-crisis reconstruction programmes in Angola through the development of industrial safety standards, in rural Albania with the redesign of municipal water and sewage systems and in Mozambique with the drafting of documentation needed to establish electricity regulations.

6. Innovative pilot initiatives

26. Underlining many innovative initiatives set in motion through contributions from the UNV Special Voluntary Fund is the full participation of people most immediately concerned. When individuals such as village environmentalists or HIV-infected persons are drawn into UNV-supported programmes, it sends a powerful message deriving from the relevance of their knowledge, skills and

wisdom and ensures a more ready acceptance of the United Nations presence on the part of communities touched.

27. HIV/AIDS. In addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, UNV has focused primarily on community-oriented approaches. Mixed teams of international and national UNVs have supported National AIDS programmes in a number of least developed countries in Africa and Asia (e.g., Uganda, Zambia, Nepal) in the areas of information, education and communication; training and counselling; home-based care activities; and in the strengthening of local self-help groups and the creation of support networks. As a follow-up to the Paris AIDS Summit of 1994, and in close collaboration with UNDP and UNAIDS, UNV took up the challenge of promoting the greater involvement of people themselves living with HIV/AIDS in programmes for which they have been treated traditionally as passive target groups. The first pilot project, launched in Malawi and Zambia in 1997, is empowering people living with HIV and AIDS, to build-up solidarity and to promote "best practices". Financed initially through the UNV SVF and with technical backstopping from UNAIDS and UNDP, some 20 NUNV posts were established in both countries to support the engagement of those infected and affected by the epidemic as counsellors, peer educators, trainers and project coordinators in various institutions including national AIDS control programmes, international and national NGOs, public and private hospitals, and relevant government institutions, including the army. With the assistance of UNDP, a monitoring and evaluation framework has been designed to ensure timely and appropriate feedback on the project activities.

28. Eco-volunteers: A global grass-roots response to Rio. The concept of the "eco-volunteer" grew out of discussions between UNV and several NGO representatives attending the Earth Summit in 1992. It builds on the capacity that already exists in members of many local communities for solving environmental problems and seeks to strengthen and extend their reach as change agents. Together with two NGO networks - Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI), based in Nairobi and International Secretariat for Water (ISW), based in Montreal, UNV established a network of national and local NGOs in 14 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, together with Canada, which joined this experiment to promote the work of the first generation of eco-volunteers. In all, 17 NUNVs and some 160 eco-volunteers worked for three years under this programme, which was completed in 1997. Examples of eco-volunteer work are: in India, barefoot solar technicians (most of them women) maintain their solar unit in their villages; in South Africa, eco-volunteers from informal community-based organizations work in townships, peri-urban areas, and rural communities to promote environmental and human rights education; and in Ecuador, eco-volunteers support community organization in neighbourhoods situated on the fragile slopes of the Pichincha volcano.

III. TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

29. The challenges and opportunities faced by UNV as it moves towards the new century have crystallized during the current biennium. First is the imperative for UNV to become a learning organization, building on five external reviews undertaken in 1995-1996, which examined areas of corporate relevance and on the internal management audit exercise that took place in late 1997. Second is the

need to further the strategic use of the Special Voluntary Fund, particularly in order to (a) enhance UNV capacity to monitor and evaluate and (b) empower the UNV programme officers to undertake programme development functions. Third is the mandate given to UNV by the General Assembly to be the focal point for preparations, implementation and follow-up of the International Year of Volunteers in 2001.

A. Lessons Learned from Programme Reviews

30. To take stock of the evolving profile of UNV, a series of reviews were undertaken in 1995-1996 focusing on five areas of corporate concern: the use of NUNVs; humanitarian assistance, peace-building and democratization activities; decentralized facilities and community-focused work; the design and implementation of the Special Voluntary Fund; and the role of UNV as an executing agency. To consolidate and help to internalize the findings of these reviews, UNV undertook an exercise in 1997 to synthesize the lessons learned. The following generic conclusions emerged as important to future UNV activities:

(a) The contributions of qualified and motivated UNVs have been successful in supporting the work of a range of new and strategic partners, including Governments, United Nations specialized agencies and civil society organizations;

(b) UNVs are progressively widening the outreach and enhancing the presence of the United Nations system at the grass-roots level, especially in rural areas.

31. Cross-cutting recommendations highlighted the following areas as needing swift and focused corporate attention:

(a) Upgrading the briefing and support provided to the UNVs to ensure their full efficiency and effectiveness;

(b) Decentralizing programme development functions and strengthening the role of the UNV programme officers serving in UNDP country offices;

(c) Ensuring that UNV partners have a clear grasp of the comparative advantages of UNV;

(d) Establishing a more formalized learning framework to help the UNV programme to use lessons learned from programme implementation and from the experiences and insights of the UNVs.

B. Internal management audit exercise

32. The UNDP Office of Audit and Performance Review (OAPR) undertook a management audit of UNV in September-November 1997, which was conducted using the new accountability framework of UNDP based on the "criteria of control" approach to audit and accounting. This audit was of particular utility and relevance to the organization in light of the fact that the last internal audit

of UNV was done over ten years ago. It yielded results which both validated the corrective measures that had been initiated during the biennium by UNV and highlighted priority areas for action in 1998.

33. An audit follow-up action plan was formulated in December 1997, during a return mission of OAPR, which specifies indicators of performance, responsible units and deadlines. This plan has been incorporated into individual unit work plans for 1998 and implementation is monitored by the Executive Coordinator on a monthly basis. Priority areas for follow-up in 1998 are: the continued improvement of current financial management, oversight and control measures; a review of staff training needs in respect of the volunteer management system to ensure that the facilities offered by the system are used consistently; closer attention to human resource planning and management; a reappraisal of the cost-effectiveness of the roster operations located in the Cyprus Off-Shore Processing Centre; measures to improve monitoring and support of serving UNVs; and revamped briefing and orientation of new recruits. The formulation and implementation of annual training plans, based on a comprehensive needs analysis, has also been given prime attention for 1998.

C. Special Voluntary Fund

34. The analysis and reconciliation of the resources available to the SVF has proven to be complex. When the SVF was approved by the Governing Council in its decision 88/38, its purpose was to provide resources to fund pilot and experimental projects and the external costs (travel and resettlement allowances) of UNVs. By 1992, the Governing Council had approved the full charge of external costs to projects, allowing the major portion of the Fund to be used for pilot and experimental projects and absorbing the minimal difference between pro forma and actual costs, if the need arose. While a preliminary analysis was done in October 1997 just prior to the audit, a complete reconciliation of the Fund was completed in early 1998, taking into account all sources of funds. This has resulted in a projected balance of resources at 31 December 1997 of $23.5 million. Of this amount, $1.8 million results from the accumulated excess of pro forma costs over actual costs. Having considered the recommendations of the internal management audit regarding the use of the $1.8 million, UNV is proposing to utilize the amount for purposes identified by the auditors as critical, as indicated in paragraph 39 below.

35. The accumulation of resources arose as a result of several factors, including the non-availability of accurate financial information, disruptions resulting from the move to Bonn and resultant staff changes. In light of these factors, UNV had adopted a conservative approach to project approvals. As more precise financial information is available and the system has been strengthened to ensure the reliability of resource projections and monitoring, steps have been taken to revitalize the approval of projects in strategic and growth-producing programme arenas.

36. The projected balance of the Fund from voluntary contributions and interest income, net of expenditures on pilot and experimental projects, is currently $21.7 million, discounting the surplus of external costs of $1.8 million. As of February 1998, of $21.7 million, $13.6 million was committed for approved

projects and external costs of serving UNVs. Of the remaining resources of $8.1 million, there is a pipeline of $5.8 million, leaving uncommitted resources of $2.3 million.

37. Included in the commitments of $13.6 million is the sum of $800,000 allocated for use by the 70 UNV programme officers ($700,000) and UNV headquarters ($100,000) during 1998 to initiate and formulate innovative projects falling strictly within the SVF guidelines provided by the Executive Board. Funds will be made available to the UNV programme officers, to enable them to enhance contributions of UNVs to the programmes and facilitate their ability to take creative initiatives in the field. Key to the success of this effort is an effective monitoring procedure at headquarters. The activities will be carefully reviewed and evaluated by UNV headquarters through reports submitted twice yearly by the UNV programme officers. A thorough evaluation will be undertaken in 1999.

38. Of the uncommitted resources of $2.3 million, UNV plans on using $500,000 to strengthen the evaluation function to enable UNV to become a learning organization. The funds will be used to finance strategic, thematic and cross-cutting evaluations that will enable UNV to draw lessons for the future, including the documentation and dissemination of instructive practices. Limited resources are presently available for these types of evaluations, which are crucial in enabling UNV to be fully accountable for the impact of its activities. Future funding of such evaluations up to an annual amount of $250,000 will be provided from income to the Fund. The balance of remaining resources will be programmed during the year.

39. It is proposed that the surplus of pro forma costs over actual costs, amounting to $1.8 million, which has accumulated over the past decade, be used to fund those critical areas highlighted in the audit report. While several of the items have been addressed, e.g., strengthening of the financial system and an annual review of the pro forma costs so that they may be adjusted in line with changes in the average actual costs, others lack funding. These measures should reduce or eliminate similar accumulations in future. The areas to be addressed are:

(a) Production of operational manuals to document the policies and procedures for the recruitment and management of UNVs, programming guidelines for UNV-executed projects and the revised Conditions of Service for United Nations Volunteers (estimated cost $300,000);

(b) Preparation of a pre-assignment briefing and orientation package for new UNVs upon their arrival at their duty stations (estimated cost $100,000);

(c) Strengthening of monitoring functions by UNV programme officers and UNV headquarters staff, as stressed in the internal audit as a prerequisite to ensure the relevance of UNV work (estimated cost $500,000 for the biennium). In the future, supplementary funding of $250,000 per annum for monitoring activities will be provided from income to the Fund;

(d) Provision of a reserve for security and medical evacuation needs (estimated cost $900,000 for the biennium). UNV is facing increasing costs for

security and medical evacuations, personal safety measures and its share of inter-agency field security measures. These costs cannot always be predicted or controlled. It is planned to replenish the reserve by provision for such costs within the proforma cost of UNVs.

40. The proposals above are summarized as:

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Operational manuals	300 000
Pre-assignment briefing and orientation package	100 000
UNV programme officer and headquarters monitoring	500 000
Reserve for evacuations and security costs	900 000
Total:	1 800 000

D. Budget strategy

41. In its decision 97/24, the Executive Board approved the UNDP budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium, which included gross budget estimates for UNV of $30.9 million to be offset by $1.0 million of income relating to the reimbursement by United Nations specialized agencies of part of the support cost for UNVs financed through their programmes. The reimbursement would be equivalent to 10 per cent of the direct costs of UNVs. This is consistent with procedures already in effect for UNVs under trust funds, memoranda of understanding with the United Nations Secretariat and other international organizations.

42. Of particular note is the revised staffing formula for supplementing UNV headquarters staff, which was reviewed by the Administrator in response to paragraph 45 of Executive Board decision 95/28. As a result, the UNV budget now comprises: (a) a fixed component covering a basic management structure for the programme as a whole, including the various activities carried out by UNV under its mandate as the principal custodian of international volunteerism; and (b) a variable component based on a revised staffing formula to cover operational support to the fielding of volunteers. This new formula covers volunteers financed from UNV regular resources and incorporates additional economies of scale. Budget adjustments based on the application of the formula will be made on a biennial basis. It is noteworthy that at 31 December 1997, under this revised staffing formula, UNV would have earned 2.5 additional staffing units were the adjustment to be made annually.

E. International Year of Volunteers

43. The role of UNV in the implementation of International Year of Volunteers in 2001 was clearly enunciated at the fifty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. UNV will work in close collaboration with other organizations

of the United Nations system and with Governments and international and national volunteer and non-governmental organizations in identifying ways and means of enhancing the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service. It is anticipated that the Year could make a significant contribution to generating increased awareness of the achievements and further potential of volunteer service, to encouraging offers of service from a greatly expanded number of individuals and to channelling resources to augment the effectiveness of such service. In this respect, the Year is expected to enrich the work of UNV described elsewhere in the present report.

IV. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

44. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Note the diversity in the range of work of the United Nations volunteers and their roles, the growth of the United Nations Volunteers programme overall and, in particular, the achievement of reaching the largest number of serving volunteers;

2. Also note the key messages of the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting, captured in the Bonn Declaration;

3. Commend the United Nations Volunteers programme for continuing its efforts to ensure relevance through the launching and implementation of Strategy 2000;

4. Note the issues identified by the internal management audit and recognize the work under way by the United Nations Volunteers programme to respond to its findings;

5. Welcome the decision of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session to proclaim 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers;

6. Endorse the proposals for the use of the one-time Special Voluntary Fund surplus totalling $1.8 million to implement the recommendations of the internal management audit;

7. Decide that it is appropriate to finance from the Special Voluntary Fund strategic and cross-cutting thematic evaluations and to supplement the monitoring of United Nations volunteers and projects executed by the United Nations Volunteers programme.

Annex I

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS RESOURCE PLANNING TABLE

PROJECTED RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES
(in millions of United Nations dollars)

	1996-1997			1998-1999		
	SVF	Other resources	Total	SVF	Other resources	Total
Resources available						
Opening balance[1]	12.8	17.7	30.5	23.5	22.2	45.7
Income						
Contributions	7.9	87.6	95.5	8.0	93.4	101.4
Interest and miscellaneous income	3.0	1.3	4.3	2.1	1.6	3.7
Proforma external costs charged to project budgets	7.9	–	7.9	7.8	–	7.8
Biennial support budget, net (UNDP regular resources)[2]	–	34.4	34.4	–	29.9	29.9
Total	31.6	141.0	172.6	41.4	147.1	188.5
Use of resources						
A. Pilot projects	2.8	–	2.8	8.0	–	8.0
B. Other programmes	–	81.7	81.7	–	95.5	95.5
C. Programme support						
1. Support costs	–	2.7	2.7	–	2.8	2.8
2. Biennial support budget (net)[2]						
Programme officers	–	4.5	4.5	–	6.0	6.0
Programme support and management administration	–	25.5	25.5	–	23.9	23.9
D. Actual proforma external costs	5.3	–	5.3	9.6	–	9.6
Total	8.1	114.4	122.5	17.6	128.2	145.8
Balance of resources at 31 December[1]	23.5	26.6	50.1	23.8	18.9	42.7

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	1996-1997			1998-1999		
	SVF	Other resources	Total	SVF	Other resources	Total
Commitments for future years (as at 31 December)						
External costs	4.2	–	4.2	5.0	–	5.0
Experimental pilot project	5.9	–	5.9	11.0	–	11.0
Other programmes	–	18.3	18.3	–	16.7	16.7
Total commitments	10.1	18.3	28.4	16.0	16.7	32.7
Balance of uncommitted resources (Surplus/deficit as at 31 December)	13.4	8.3	21.7	7.8	2.2	10.0
Total number of serving volunteers (for biennium)	400	3 890	4 290	900	5 600	6 500

[a] Refers to Executive Board decisions 96/41 and 97/24; unutilized balance at the end of the biennium reverts to the Regular Resources of UNDP.

Annex II

[United Nations Volunteers]

DECLARATION OF THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS
VOLUNTEERS INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING

Bonn, Germany
4 December 1997

We, the participants in the 4th Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, representing Governments and National Focal Points, Co-operating Organisations, national and international Non-Governmental Organisations, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other members of the UN family, issue this Declaration as a result of our deliberations during this IGM, jointly hosted by the Government of Germany and UNV.

We recognise the considerable progress of the UNV programme in meeting the expectations expressed in the Kathmandu Statement of the 3rd IGM, held in 1991. The continuing emphasis on volunteer support to technical co-operation and community-based activities, and expanded volunteer efforts in the areas of humanitarian relief and democratisation has had notable impact. We also welcome UNV's increased flexibility with regard to volunteer categories and terms of service, resulting in improved capacity of the programme to respond to the needs of its partners.

This Declaration reflects the wide-ranging dialogue during this IGM, which took into account UNV's Strategy 2000 developed to focus its volunteer activities. We firmly believe the spirit of volunteerism and solidarity, the value of service, and the virtue of teaching and sharing with those in our community or in communities elsewhere in the world, should continue to be increasingly incorporated into world-wide development as a flexible, efficient and effective response to ensure that needs for human expertise and service are met. At this important juncture for volunteerism and development in a globalising world, we take this opportunity to help guide future directions of volunteer contributions into the 21st century:

1. UNV, administered by UNDP, is privileged to be the volunteer arm of the UN system. As such, we especially encourage it to expand and strengthen its role as a global advocate for volunteers and for volunteerism as a real development choice now and for the future. UNV should capitalise on the comparative advantages it holds as a result of serving the UN system, including ready access to Governments, neutrality, and visibility as the part of the human face of the world Organisation.

2. We, the partners and supporters of UNV and global volunteerism, believe in and will work toward a substantial growth in volunteerism and a significant increase in volunteer support to development. We recommend UNV work to increase access for volunteer assistance to international development co-operation institutions, including regional organisations and private sector

foundations, to promote and build volunteer roles into their activities, to increase recognition of the expertise and motivation volunteers bring to development today, and to stimulate greater use of this vital human resource, particularly in a time of declining official development assistance, of crucial need to put existing resources to optimum use, of desire for co-ordination, and of demand for reform.

3. We recommend UNV continue to enhance its effectiveness by implementing Strategy 2000. The work of UN Volunteers will be substantially bolstered by the increased attention paid to areas such as urban development, environmental management, and preventive/curative development outlined in Strategy 2000 and undertaken in partnership with the relevant substantive entities. We encourage Governments, the UN system, and development organisations to incorporate national and international UN Volunteers into their programming in these broad areas as one means of pursuing the goals set by the Global Conferences.

4. While strengthening its traditional co-operation with Governments, we encourage UNV to continue to develop innovative partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to ground its future actions in community-based participatory approaches, to promote environmental activism, and to increase the utilisation of qualified nationals in their home countries within mixed teams of national and international UN Volunteers. At the heart of UNV's action should be the desire to assist people's empowerment through participation in decision-making to overcome poverty, to unleash the creativity of the disadvantaged themselves, and to help them bring their own resourcefulness as valued partners to the complex development process.

5. We support the emerging importance of the strategic analysis of volunteer contributions in development undertaken by UNV in wide consultation with its partners, UNV's pro-active engagement to promote volunteer roles, and the encouragement UNV has received in the form of growing financial support to strategic programme initiatives. We appeal to all parties at the global, regional and country levels to ensure that adequate financial resources are forthcoming so that the immense potential of volunteer contributions, now and into the next century, are fully realised.

6. To remain relevant and vibrant into the next century, we encourage UNV to actively become a learning organisation by studying the impact of volunteer experiences on the front lines of development and applying the lessons learned to future initiatives. We strongly encourage UNV to further raise awareness of volunteer action by documenting and disseminating best practices and sharing these with partners to assist in the scaling up of successful approaches. Because we realise that inspiration and innovation to tackle development challenges can be found everywhere, we also encourage a mutual interchange of information among all global partners, including from the South to the North.

7. The recent designation by the General Assembly of the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) reflects a significant step for recognising, facilitating, networking and promoting the work of volunteers. It is appropriate that the next century begin with, and be inspired by, a global vision of volunteerism. Within the framework of IYV we encourage UNV to work with national volunteer movements to disseminate the history and achievements of

the voluntary efforts of women and men and how volunteerism in each culture and country has responded to human needs.

8. We recommend that the UNV programme participates in EXPO 2000 in order to promote the best practices of volunteerism across the globe.

9. We are convinced that it would be valuable to nations throughout the world that the contribution of volunteer effort to national and global welfare and development be highlighted in publications such as UNDP's Human Development Report, including a full report in or around the International Year of Volunteers 2001.

Above all, this Declaration represents our conviction of the vitality of people's voluntary action world-wide. We are persuaded of the validity of the goals expressed in this Declaration and shall therefore, as much as feasible and appropriate to our roles in our institutions and Governments, act to realise the immense potential volunteers represent for development and peace inspired by the powerful examples of volunteers themselves.